



BULLETIN OF THE POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



*Postal Card with Easter Greetings from
1948 Fischer Cp 107.15*

Message from the President.....	3	Polish Officers in Africa during WWII.....	9-11
Society News.....	4	Groszy Overprints.....	12-15
Polonus PURLS.....	5	Easter Cards from Interned Soldiers	16-17
Easter Greetings from Postwar Poland	6	New Issues	18-20
Gems of Polish Philately.....	7-8		



POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Officers & Directors

President	Bob Ogradnik P.O. Box 240428 Ballwin, MO 63024-0428 krpsl@earthlink.net
Vice President	Hank Bieniecki P.O. Box 760 Maryville, IL 62062 hank@biistamp.com
Secretary	Roman Sobus 1110 N. Oakley Blvd. Chicago, IL 60622 Rsobus9013@cs.com
Treasurer	Dan Lubelski 111 Helen Drive Rossford, OH 43460 dlubelski@accesstoledo.com
Directors	Dr. James Mazepa, C.O.B. jmazepa@comcast.net Richard Jaraczewski rjara@sonic.net Dr. Paul Phillips PaulXLPE@gmail.com Chris Kulpinski chris@kulpinski.net

Publication Committee

Chairman	Bob Ogradnik P.O. Box 240428 Ballwin, MO 63024-0428 krpsl@earthlink.net
Senior Contributing Editors	Hank Bieniecki hank@biistamp.com Dr. James Mazepa jmazepa@comcast.net
Senior Editors & Translators	Richard Jaraczewski rjara@sonic.net Robert Puchala rob3@ce3.pl Przemek Konopka info@profilex.pl Roman Sobus Rsobus9013@cs.com
Associate Editors	Sam Ginsburg samgins1730@yahoo.com Dr. Paul Phillips PaulXLPE@gmail.com Bob Nowicki philatelist@comcast.net
New Issues	Dan Lubelski dlubelski@accesstoledo.com Frank Karwoski sunvoyager43@gmail.com
Publisher	DesignSolstice info@designsolstice.com
Printer	John LaPorta album@comcast.net

Website Committee

Chairman	Hank Bieniecki hank@biistamp.com
Website Developer	Przemek Konopka info@profilex.pl
Function Moderator	Richard Jaraczewski rjara@sonic.net

Committee Chairpersons

Expertizing	Hank Bieniecki hank@biistamp.com
Librarian	Dr. Mary Ann Frost drmaryannfrost@gmail.com
Membership	Richard Jaraczewski rjara@sonic.net

Study Groups

POW Camps	Roman Sobus Rsobus9013@cs.com
DP / Intern Camps	Chris Kulpinski chris@kulpinski.net
Aero-Philately	Dr. Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski jkupiec@mednet.ucla.edu
Cinderellas & Labels	Chris Kulpinski chris@kulpinski.net

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Membership: Members participate in all the services and activities offered by the Society, including complete access to the Society website (www.polonus.org) and the option of receiving a quarterly bulletin in print or electronically. The two membership categories are: **Regular and Junior**. Annual dues for **Regular Members** opting to receive **Printed Bulletin (via mail)** are: **North America - \$30 / Outside N.A. - \$40** or **Electronic Bulletin (via website)** are: **North America - \$25 / Outside N.A. - \$25**. Annual dues for **Junior Members** (under age 16 and electronic bulletin only) are: \$10. Annual dues are payable in US funds no later than the end of March of each calendar year. Dues for new members are pro-rated for the time of the year application is submitted, i.e., for period **Jan – Mar 100%** of annual dues; **Apr – Jun 75%**; **Jul – Sep 50%**; and **Oct – Dec 125%** (to cover full payment for following year).

Dues and Changes of Address to be sent to: Polonus Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 489, Maryville, IL 62062.

Articles for publication to be sent to: Chairman of Publication Committee.

Membership queries to be sent to: Membership Chairman.

General Society matters and complaints to be sent to: President.

Bulletin Advertising:

Member to Member Ads – Members have the opportunity to post ads to fellow members **free of charge**. Limit of 500 characters, defined as a letter, space, number or punctuation mark. Member's names and addresses are not included in this limitation.

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Business Card Ad: \$50.00 annual fee for insertion in four issues.

Send ad copy to: Chairman of Publication Committee and make check payable to: Polonus Philatelic Society

Other Ads: Full page or insert ads for single copy available. Send e-mail with ad copy to: info@polonus.org for pricing.

Message From The President

By: Bob Ogrodnik

The good news is that Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow and based upon weather forecasting lore, spring is around the corner. This also means that there will be an increasing number of activities competing for our time. Let's not forget that stamp collecting is also a "fair weather" hobby, a time to get out and attend stamp club meetings and stamp shows. I am hopeful that many members, especially on the east coast, are planning to attend the Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition on April 1-3, 2011. Be sure to read the "Countdown to Philadelphia – PNSE 2011" on the following page.

Another reminder for those who have not already done so, pay your 2011 dues by the end of March. As we expand our outreach via the internet, an option has been provided to members to receive the bulletin on our website or to continue to receive it by mail. We also provided an opportunity on the dues reply form to make a tax deductible contribution. Thus far, more than half of the dues payments received included a tax deductible contribution. We are grateful to those who are generously supporting the Society above and beyond annual dues.

Congratulations to Polonus member David Shaw on having his article, "Chopin Vodka & Music," published in the December issue of American Philatelist. If you do not get the APS journal and would like a copy of this article, send me your request by mailed letter or e-mail. This is a wonderful topical article, illustrating yet another way of collecting and learning more about an interesting subject, in this case Chopin, whose 200th birthday we celebrated in 2010.

Stamps from Poland are gaining more attention from the philatelic press. In the February 21 issue of Linn's Stamp News, I could not help but notice the colorful Polish love stamp (kocham cię) pictured on the cover page. This stamp was issued in December 2010 and is included the New Issues section of our bulletin.

To those members who have difficulty with the

Polish language, be sure to read Sam Ginsburg's Polonus PURLS, "On-Line Translation Revisited". Try out some of the recommended websites and find out how these resources can help you overcome the challenges of translation. As a reminder, the Polonus website has a Polish-English philatelic dictionary to help you navigate through philatelic and postal terminology used with Polish stamps and covers. The website dictionary is a work in progress and we encourage you to help us build this resource. Send your list of words that you want included to: Richard Jaraczewski at rjara@sonic.net

This issue includes an article on postal stationery, illustrating another interesting facet of Poland collecting. Be sure to read the article by Roman Sobus titled "Easter Greetings from Postwar Poland" (see illustration on cover). If postal stationery (postal cards and pre-stamped envelopes) resonates with some of you, consider starting a Study Group. Contact Roman Sobus or me if you are interested in learning more about what is involved with a Study Group.

Thanks to Jan Niebrzydowski, this issue includes another article contributing to the history of Polish Armed Forces in Africa during WWII through the letters received by Stefania Bardziłowska and Helena Lübke. We believe this is the first time the story of Polish troops in Africa is being told through these covers.

A very popular subject for Poland collectors is the "Groszy Overprints" and, thanks to Dr. James DeLine, we are pleased to feature part one of a three-part series of articles covering this subject. Whether or not you have a well-developed collection of groszy overprints, this is a "must read". The article defines the general perimeter of collecting variations and leaves plenty of room for individuals to expand with examples of district and local varieties.

Please send your comments and questions to my attention at krpsl@earthlink.net. I would like to know what you think about our bulletin, website and other membership benefits. We value your input.

Countdown to Philly – PNSE 2011

By the time you receive this bulletin, there could be less than two weeks before our annual event in Oaks, Pennsylvania. Hopefully, you plan to attend and if so, this article will be of interest and importance.

Our 9th Annual Meeting and Exhibition will be held at the Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition (PNSE 2011) on April 1-3, 2011, at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, Pennsylvania. See website: www.pnse.org

The Homewood Suites by Hilton, located at 860 Shannondell Avenue in Audubon, PA is the recommended hotel with a “Special PNSE Show Rate of \$119”. For reservations call: (610) 539-7300 and ask for Nicole Ream.

As of this writing we have 11 members, 13 exhibits, and 47 frames registered for this show. Show organizers have frames available and even though the deadline was February 13th, late entries will be considered. We have a commitment for 70 frames and we are hopeful that late entries will bridge the shortfall. You do not have to attend to exhibit.

If you are going to attend be sure to visit the Polonus society table to get your “welcome packet” that will contain the final details for Polonus activities (including the location of the Polonus hospitality room). In order to insure your packet will be available, please

send an e-mail to krpsl@earthlink.net indicating that you plan to attend.

The Board of Directors Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 2nd at 8:00 am in Room B of the Expo Center. Attendance is limited to officers, directors and committee chairs.

The Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 2nd at 10:00 am in Room B of the Expo Center. All members and guests are invited to attend.

We will have a reception on Friday, April 1st following the close of the show at 6:00 pm. Details for this event will be included in the “welcome packet” and on our website, www.polonus.org.

Bourse space is available for up to 50 dealers. In addition to requesting that dealers bring their best Poland material, we can expect a couple of Poland specialists. Check with the PNSE website, www.pnse.org, for a listing and plan your shopping tour. We will have a supply of POLPEX material (souvenir sheets, cards and covers) and other items for sale at the society table.

Dr. James Mazepa will conduct a docent tour of Poland exhibits on Sunday, April 3rd at 11:00 am. This will be an excellent opportunity to get an insight into the material being exhibited by a noted philatelic judge.

SEE YOU ALL IN PHILLY!

Pelczar Honored As Philatelic Author

Mr. Piotr Pelczar, Polonus member and a regular contributor to our bulletin, was honored for the 2009 year with the “Medal of Merit for Promoting Philatelic Publication” by the Polish Philatelic Union (PZF). This is the third time Mr. Pelczar has received this award. He was also nominated for the “Prymus Award” (Oscar of Polish Philately) in the category “Author of the Year”.

An article published in Polonus bulletin #541, “Holiday Cards from Soldiers Interned in Switzerland,” was also published in the December 2010 issue of Przegląd Filatelistyczny. This marked the 300th article published by the author. Polonus would like to congratulate him on this milestone!



POLONUS PURLS (Polonus Philatelic URLs)

On-Line Translation Revisited (Are we there yet?)

By: Sam Ginsburg

The Polish Language Challenge

As Asia Rolewicz of the www.bab.la[1] “language portal” explained in last summer’s e-mail exchange, I was asking her site to translate a Polish word that was “an adjective in the plural genitive case”, but most dictionaries list words in nominative case (for nouns and adjectives) or in the infinitive (for verbs). It sounded like I had to learn how to find the root form of Polish words if the internet dictionary and translation services didn’t have them.

There’s hope. The Polish-English section of www.bab.la will be expanding to include verb inflections (past, present, future, 1st person singular & plural, etc.). They plan to eventually include noun and adjective forms as well. Let’s hope it doesn’t take too long.

In the meantime, some of us (me) have a lot of trouble with foreign cases and inflections. For us EFL (English as a First Language) people, there is Professor Oscar Swan’s website, polish.slavic.pitt.edu, which includes a prize-winning 500-page downloadable Polish grammar book/PDF, and an on-line dictionary complete with search tips (e.g., trimming letters off the right end of a word will often lead to a translation that makes sense). There are also links to various Polish-language resources, and a forum where you can log in and ask questions. Swan even has an on-line first-year Polish language course, which I should take along with diet and exercise. The list of features goes on (e.g., pronunciation guide, songs, soap operas, and downloadable language drills), but some of the links were broken when I looked.

Wikipedia gives an overview of Polish Grammar at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_grammar, as well as a link to Ron F. Feldstein’s 100-page Concise Polish Grammar at seelrc.org:8080/grammar/pdf/comp-grammar_polish.pdf. The Slavic and East Euro-

pean Language Research Center at www.seelrc.org also has links to a variety of Polish resources which I haven’t explored. The Polish history link looks quite promising, however.

Dictionary Sites

Asia Rolewicz of www.bab.la also explained the difference between an on-line translation site and an on-line dictionary. A translation site will accept a URL or a page of Polish (for example), and do its best to translate all of it. A dictionary will accept a word or two and give you a variety of translations, depending on the uses.

Let’s start with dictionaries. Professor Oscar Swan’s dictionary, polish.slavic.pitt.edu/~swan/beta/, provides search tips, a variety of similar terms, and a list of alternative inflections (the noun, indefinite pronoun, hypothetical past pluperfect plural passive positive possessive, etc.) www.bab.la, which I am using more and more, has many of the same features that Swan does, but www.bab.la is jazzier-looking. www.bab.la included about 17 languages at last count. I typed in a word that it didn’t understand, but when I started backspacing from the right end, after “cky” was deleted, it came up with a number of translations and usages. It will also do automatic web and forum searches for the word. In addition to a forum, www.bab.la also includes suggest-your-own-translation, lessons, games, etc.

I think it’s a good idea, however, to have a list of several dictionaries or translation sites, in the hopes that if one doesn’t translate your word or phrase, another will. But the old standards, such as Babylon.com, Poltan.com, Systran, dict.pl, and others, seem to translate better than www.bab.la or Google language tools. So I’m still searching for good sites. [To be continued]

This column discusses some issues, tips, and sites to help with Polish-English translation. Please send corrections, additions, and other suggestions to me at samgins1730@yahoo.com.

Endnotes:

[1] In this article, “http://” has been omitted from the front of internet links because most current browsers will insert those characters when necessary.

Easter Greetings from Postwar Poland

By: Roman Sobus

A segment of Polish philately that in my opinion does not receive much English language press is postal stationery, i.e., the postal card (kartka pocztowa) and the envelope (koperta) with preprinted postage stamps. Please note, there is a difference between postcards or post cards and postal cards. Postcards or post cards do not have preprinted postage stamps, nor are they issued by the Post, whereas postal cards have preprinted postage and are issued by the Post. We have all seen them and may very well own several. They are usually relegated to the box that contains the items that we plan to organize when we have some extra time.

The Polish Post issues approximately forty different postal cards each year, more than the number of stamp emissions. Envelopes are issued less frequently, on average one every several years. While stamps are printed in quantities in the millions of individual stamps, postal cards are printed in quantities in the tens of thousands, with 50,000 being about average. These items are listed in the Fischer Katalog, Tom II, under the heading Cp for postal cards and Ck for the envelopes.

Postal cards may or may not have illustrations. They do, however, provide a larger "canvas" on which to illustrate a subject in greater detail. Many of the preprinted postage stamps on postal cards copy designs of stamp issues. In any case, they should make wonderful additions to any collection. Most of these items are inexpensive, especially the post-1970 issues, and they can add a new dimension to any collection!

While perusing an internet auction, I came across an interesting card which at first glance appeared to be an Easter card, with an illustration on the reverse. **(Figures 1 & 2)**

There is nothing special about such a card since Easter greetings are very commonly exchanged in Poland. This, however, upon closer examination turned out to be a postal stationery issue from 1948. A quick look in the catalog confirmed that the card (Cp107) with the printed design of stamp Fischer no. 450 having a denomination of 6 zloty was an official Polish Post issue. It was printed with twenty different illustrations, none of which were particularly religious, but all related to the Easter holiday season. Other illustrations of the Cp107 card are shown below. **(Figures 3 & 4)**

The card was reissued the following year utilizing available stock of the Cp107, this time overprinted to a value of 10 zloty to reflect a change in postal rates. This card **(Figure 5)** is listed in Fischer as Cp110.

Many articles on postal cards, formula cards and post cards originating from POW or Internment camps have been presented in this bulletin, however, this is the first time for an article on postal cards issued by the Polish Post. This is another example of the many ways in which one can participate in collecting Poland.

Thanks to Mr. Piotr Pelczar for providing the images for this article.

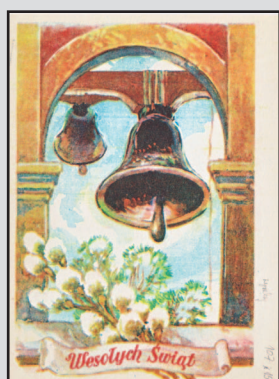


Figure 1

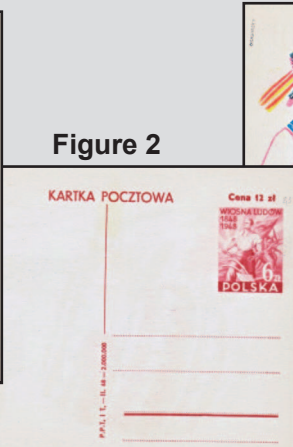


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

THE HIGH VALUES OF THE LARGE EAGLE ISSUE OF 1924

By: Dr. James Mazepa

When the First World War ended, Europe was crippled economically, which resulted in a creeping monetary crisis. Inflation, at first moderate, spiraled out of hand. This was especially true in Germany, which was hit the hardest, Poland and Hungary. While no one has defined exactly when "hyperinflation" occurred in Poland, for philatelic purposes, I use September 1, 1923. From this date onward, postal rates changed by multiples of the then current postal rates on a weekly or biweekly basis.

In April of 1924 Prime Minister Władysław Grabski, a prominent economist, instituted a currency reform. He changed the currency from the Polish mark to the gold-based złoty (pegged at 0.1687g of pure gold). This change took effect on May 1, 1924.

Between January and March 1924, the Polish Post issued a set of ten stamps with values between 10,000 and 1,000,000 Polish marks to meet the increasing fees of the hyperinflation. According to the Fischer catalog, the 2,000,000 mark stamp was issued on April 23. These stamps were valid until April 30, 1924, when they were replaced by a new issue with values in the gold-based złoty. The two high values of this issue are true gems of Polish philately.

THE ONE MILLION MARK STAMP

The exact day of issue of the 1,000,000 mark stamp is not known. All of the covers I have seen are dated in March and April 1924, however, I have seen a loose stamp from Katowice dated February 29, 1924. No census of the

1,000,000 mark stamp has been completed, but many that I have seen were sent from Warsaw and Lwów. I have also seen usages from Łódź, Rybnik, Maniewicz, Bielsko, and Poznań. One can conclude that this stamp had a wide distribution. **Figure 1** is a registered surface letter from Lwów to Lyon, France, sent March 10, 1924. On this date the international surface letter rate to France would have been



Figure 1 – 1,000,000 mark stamp, Lwów to Lyon, France, March 10, 1924



Figure 2 – 1,000,000 mark stamp, Warsaw to Budapest, Hungary by air, March 31, 1924

Gems of Polish Philately (Cont.)

550,000 marks plus 550,000 marks for registration for a total of 1,100,000 marks.

Figure 2 is an air mail postal card sent Warsaw to Budapest, March 31, 1924, on the first flight after the winter break. The 1,350,000 rate consists of 250,000 marks for a postal card, plus 1,100,000 marks for Express service.

There is no census of 1,000,000 mark letters. This is now a matter for philatelists to document. However, I would estimate that between 25 and 35 letters exist. Used examples also exist; however, care should be taken as there are many fake cancels and postmarks.

THE TWO MILLION MARK STAMP

This stamp is a philatelic mystery. As stated above, Fisher notes this stamp was issued on April 23, 1924. Circular #14 of the Polish Ministry of Post and Telegraph state the date of issue as March 29, 1924. It may be that the date of issue is the March date, but the date placed on sale is the April date. But even this creates a problem. Only six letters with this stamp are recorded. If the stamp was on sale between April 23rd and April 30th, one would assume more than six letters with this stamps would be known. Recall that at this time the population of Warsaw was over one million, and philatelists are always looking for an excuse to make letters.

All six known letters with the 2,000,000 mark stamp were prepared by the same person, one Stefania Gutwein at 3 Sienkiewicza Street, Warsaw. Whether she was a dealer or postal employee is unknown. All letters were postmarked at the same window, 2a, of the Warsaw post office and sent by air mail on April 23rd and April 24th to Belgrade (2), Vienna (2), Budapest (1), and Paris (1). All were returned to Warsaw (sent to a fictitious addressee?) except the letter to Paris which was sent to a relative. It seems Ms. Gutwein had access to the issued, but



Figure 3 – 2,000,000 mark stamp, Warsaw to Belgrade, Yugoslavia by air, April 23, 1924, returned

not placed on sale, 2,000,000 mark stamp. How this happened is unknown. However, since Ms. Gutwein used these stamps on genuine commercial air mail letters bearing appropriate postmarks, they are listed as legitimate postal issues.

Figure 3 is one of the six letters, this one sent to Belgrade, April 23, 1924, and returned to sender. The rate is 550,000 marks for a letter less than 20 grams, plus 550,000 marks for registry, plus 1,100,000 marks for Express service for a total of 2,200,000 marks. The additional 550,000 marks for air mail service was paid in cash.

As with the 1,000,000 mark stamp, fake cancels and postmarks abound. The only genuine used examples are the six used on the above-mentioned letters. The used 2,000,000 mark stamp ranks as one of the greatest rarities of modern Poland, much rarer than the 10 koronen Kraków and the high value Kraków postage dues. Thanks to Dr. Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski and Prof. Julian Auleytner for providing information for this article.

Polish Officers in Africa During WWII

By: Jan Niebrzydowski

Editor's Note: This article expands on the history of Polish Armed Forces in Africa during WWII, as told through letters received by Stefania Bardziłowska and Helena Lübke. Reference can be made to previous articles by Niebrzydowski in Bulletins #541 and #538, by Phillips in Bulletin #531, and by Kulpinski in Bulletin #527. We are grateful to Jan Niebrzydowski for the continuation of his series of articles on this untold Polish history from his collection of covers addressed to Mrs. Bardziłowska.

After the invasion by Germany in 1940 and the subsequent fall of France, the exiled Polish government, which had its seat in Paris, and the Polish forces serving in France were evacuated to Great Britain. At that time Great Britain was in need of and requested officers who could train African recruits to serve in the British Colonial Army in Africa. The Polish Prime Minister, General Władysław Sikorski, agreed to this request and made available 300 officers for a period of two years. After appropriate training these officers were dispatched in 1941 to the Gold Coast, Gambia, Gabon, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

The African recruits obeyed orders and showed good discipline. However, the Polish officers found that the humid climate (110-130 deg F), wild animals, poisonous snakes, mosquitoes, and tropical diseases, such as malaria, were more hazardous than service on the front line.

In terms of correspondence, there is very little trace of these officers. After years of searching the philatelic market, I found no more than 10 letters. With so few letters from only two sources, I find it difficult to write a full article. Therefore, I am hopeful that the readership of this article will find some related items in their collections and help me fill-in the gaps. All letters in my possession have British stamps that have been cancelled by British Field Post Offices numbers: 46, 536 and 769. One of these letters has a mutilating cancellation. V-mail was posted free of charge. All letters have censor's cachets and have been re-sealed with sticky tape. Illustrated in this article are six letters from Polish officers in Africa.



Figure 1
Air mail letter from E. Bukowski, serving with the 12th Battalion Nigeria Regiment BWAf, APO 5200, with 15d in stamps cancelled on 8 September 1943 and posted via FPO 46. The letter bears a censor's cachet "Passed by Censor 3061" and is re-sealed with sticky tape bearing the words "Examined by 4358".



Figure 2
Air mail letter from E. Bukowski, attached to the 8th Battalion Nigeria Regiment BWAf, APO 5102, with 3d stamp cancelled 23 September 1943 and sent via FPO 46. The letter bears a censor's cachet "Passed by Censor 2862".



Figure 3
Air mail letter from E. Bukowski, serving with the 9th Battalion Nigeria Regiment BWAf with stamps valued at 3 shillings and 6d, cancelled on 15 May 1944 and sent via FPO 769. The letter bears a censor's cachet "Passed by Censor 9400." In the course of duty, Bukowski was transferred several times between various British military units in Africa.

In researching the air mail letter (Figure 6), I was able to find that in 1941 A. Hlawaty was assigned to the Military District Command in Banjul, Gambia. It was from this location that he sent the air mail letter to Mrs. Helena Lübke. At the end of 1942 he was transferred to the 2nd Autonomous West African Brigade in Ghana, and in 1943 he served in the 83rd Division in Nigeria. A. Hlawaty and several other officers extended their contracts beyond the original two-year term and continued their service with the British forces.

In September 1944 he was sent to Burma to fight the Japanese as part of the 82nd West African Division. In 1945 he was put in command of a reconnaissance regiment. In reminiscing about his tour of duty in Burma, A. Hlawaty had been quoted (by T. Lachowicz of the Nowy Dziennik, New York, on 18 February 1993) as saying, "The natural environment was more hostile than the Japanese army. It was hot and humid, the mountains were high and covered with tropical

vegetation, and there were swamps in the valleys. There was not enough drinking water, there were no roads, and provisions, including ammunition, had to be dropped from the air. There was cholera and Asian plague spread by the rats, of which there were millions. It took up to two weeks for the wounded to be carried on stretchers to a field hospital."

In 1946, A. Hlawaty went back to Africa and in 1949, he was appointed an instructor in the British Military Mission in Greece. In 1952, he served in Kenya in the African Rifles Battalion. Four years later, he retired from active service and settled in Great Britain. In the course of his military career he rose to the rank of Colonel in the British Army and was awarded a number of decorations, including the OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire).

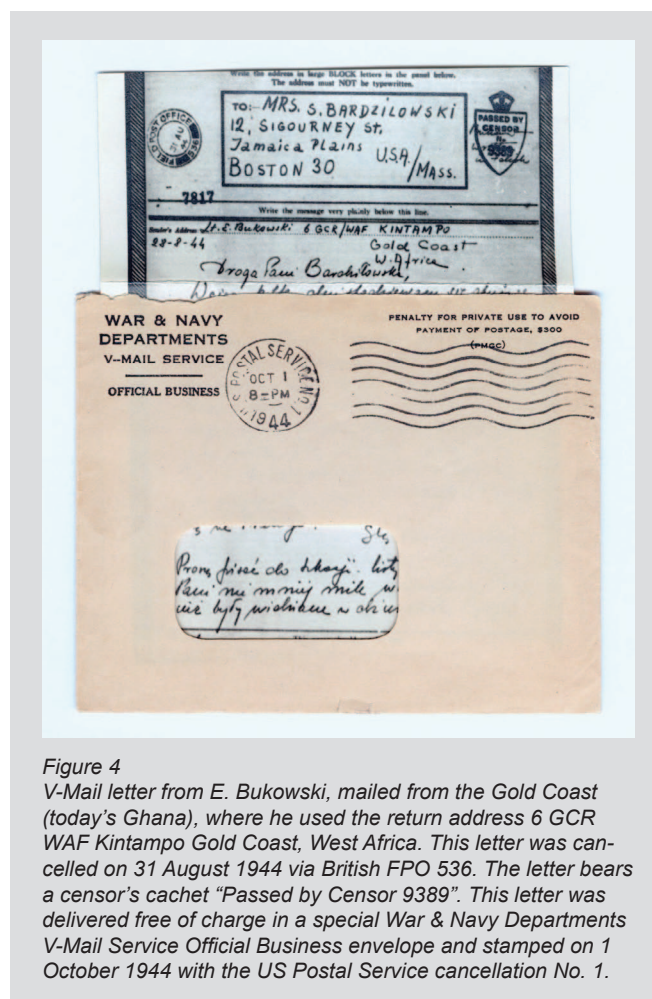


Figure 4
V-Mail letter from E. Bukowski, mailed from the Gold Coast (today's Ghana), where he used the return address 6 GCR WAF Kintampo Gold Coast, West Africa. This letter was cancelled on 31 August 1944 via British FPO 536. The letter bears a censor's cachet "Passed by Censor 9389". This letter was delivered free of charge in a special War & Navy Departments V-Mail Service Official Business envelope and stamped on 1 October 1944 with the US Postal Service cancellation No. 1.

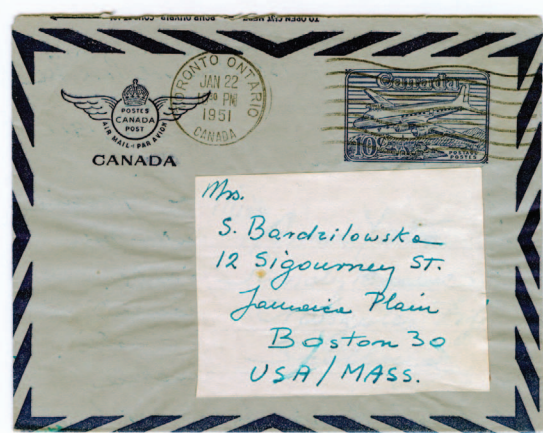


Figure 5 (above)

After the war E. Bukowski did not return to Poland, which came under Communist rule, but instead he went to Great Britain. In 1949 he moved to Canada and settled in Toronto. This is confirmed by his letter, a 10 cent Canada preprinted air mail cancelled on 22 January 1951 and addressed to Mrs. S. Bardziłowska.

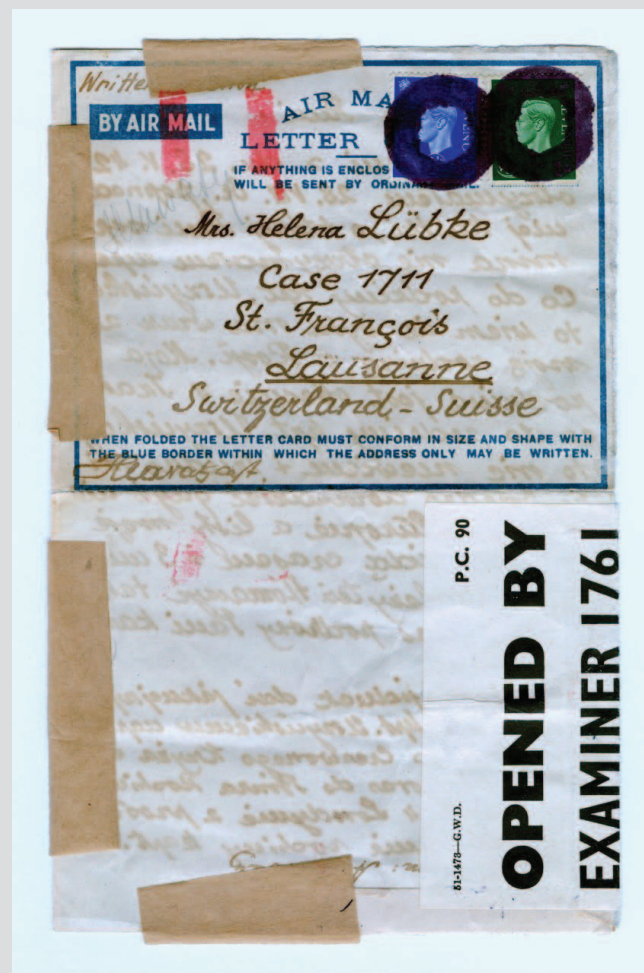


Figure 6 (right)

Air mail letter from A. Hlawaty to Helena Lübke in Switzerland sent on 28 August 1942 (as evidenced by the date in the body of the letter) with 3d in stamps and dummy cancellations. The dummy cancellation was used to obliterate the British postmark so that the place of mailing could not be identified. The letter was censored "Opened by Examiner 1761" and re-sealed with sticky tape. Helena Lübke was a Polish lady living in Lausanne, Switzerland who on her own initiative provided trans-mailing services to Poles in occupied and allied countries using undercover addresses. This letter is one of the scarcer addresses of the four known to be used by Lübke.

New Members

We welcome the following new members who recently joined our Society:

Wayne Ellison - #1709
7275 125th Street N.
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Jerzy Ziemiński - #171
23091 Audette
Dearborn, MI 48124

Andrzej R. Altenberger - #1711
501 Danens Drive
Edina, MN 55439

Garry Camolli - #1712
5262 Edgewood Drive
Lake Worth, FL 33467

Prof. Dr. Julian Auleytner - #1713
ul. Pandy 13 (Rectorat)
02-202 Warsaw, Poland

Andrew Szymanski - #1714
184 Queen Mary Drive
Brampton, Ontario
L7A 1Y3 Canada

Ignacy Szymanski - #1715
1109-1300 Mississauga Valley Blvd.
Mississauga, Ontario
L5A 3S8 Canada

J. Daniel Wojcik - #1716
6 Clendon Court
Mechanicville, NY 12118

Andrew Sulowski - #1717
1300 Islington Ave. Apt. 2407
Toronto, Ontario
M9A 5C4 Canada

GROSZY OVERPRINTS – INTRODUCTION

By: Dr. James DeLine

“One Sunday morning [October 29] in 1950 I noticed that the inhabitants of Kraków were behaving oddly. Everyone was out on the street, perfect strangers were accosting one another, little knots of people standing around. From their faces, some feverishly animated, other stunned and ashen, it seemed that a calamity had occurred. It had. Overnight the government had declared all existing Polish currency worthless. Millions of people suddenly had their savings wiped out; the few remaining small entrepreneurs, my father among them, found themselves ruined once more. Not having any savings at all, I wasn’t personally affected. But this arbitrary measure signaled the start of a new era—a process that was to transform Poland into one of the most repressive police states in Eastern Europe. The monetary reform hit Kraków’s traditional middle class hard but, as they had with the regulations that the Nazis imposed during their occupation, Krakowians found ways around them.” (From Roman by Polański, an autobiography, 1984)

As part of financial reform, a new law was passed on Tuesday, October 28, 1950 resulting in revaluation of the

Polish złoty. On October 29, 1950, one “new złoty” became equivalent to 100 “old złoty”. Each new złoty was equal to 100 new groszy. On November 6, 1950, all letters were to be franked with stamps of the new currency. As there was insufficient time to print enough stamps to meet the demand, it was decided to overprint available and currently valid



stamps with “GROSZY,” changing their value to meet the new currency valuation. The Central Supply Depot in Warsaw overprinted four million stamps (Fischer #475) with its own rubber stamp (Type T.1.) and distributed them to regional sites.

In addition, the Ministry of Posts distributed a directive that each district Post Office prepare a rubber overprinting device with which to overprint all of the stamps they possessed prior to sale. The directive was very general and simply specified that: (1) the devices prepared to apply the overprint were to be made of rubber, (2) the GROSZY overprint measure 15mm, and (3) all postage stamps in inventory should receive the overprint.

Ultimately 26 official district GROSZY overprint types were prepared and cataloged based on variations in design and the districts in which they were used. There exist some variations in size of the 26 types due to various factors, such as wear, pressure applied, and replacement of devices that had excessive wear.

In addition to the official overprint devices, it has been documented that 12 local offices took the initiative to produce their own overprint devices. The resulting overprints typically do not conform in design to the specifications of the original directive. Local overprints were produced in much smaller quantities. As a result examples are relatively scarce and difficult to find either unused or on cover. Examples of covers franked with stamps bearing local GROSZY overprints are rare. A high percentage of existing covers were probably philatelically inspired during the actual period of usage. As with all scarce/rare overprinted stamps, forgeries have been produced.



Figure 2 – Fi #519 overprinted and non-overprinted (2) and post-reform Fi #531

Genuine examples of unused local overprints are signed by experts of the Polish Philatelic Union. **Figure 1** is a description of the GROSZY overprint types as listed in Fischer Katalog Tom I.

As of November 6th, 1950, all stamps sold over the counter were to have been overprinted. Patrons could also bring currently valid stamps into the post office to be overprinted either before being affixed



Figure 3 – Late usage of GROSZY overprints, 5 April 1952



Figure 4 – GROSZY overprints applied across stamps and spilling over on cover

or after being applied as franking. Given the huge volume of stamps, some post offices were unable to overprint all stamps. In practice, stamps denominated in the old złoty without GROSZY overprint were also accepted. Gradually stamps were printed with the new groszy denomination, starting with the “Peace Congress” set of November 13, 1950 (Fischer #530 & 531), the new Bierut set (Fischer #533-540), and the new Reconstruction of Warsaw stamp (Fischer #541). These revalued issues (and others) gradually replaced the GROSZY overprints and commercial covers with combinations of GROSZY overprints and post-reform issues are common. (Figure 2)

As of April 15, 1951, due to adequate availability of new groszy denominated stamps, GROSZY overprints were no longer applied to the old złoty stamps and the rubber stamps were to be returned to Warsaw. However the previously overprinted stamps were accepted for postage until April 30, 1952. Late usages are uncommon. (Figure 3)

While most stamps were overprinted prior to being affixed to the envelope, some covers had the GROSZY overprint applied after non-overprinted stamps were placed. This is evidenced by finding the overprint partly on the stamp and partly on the envelope; or by finding the overprint crossing two different stamp designs. (Figure 4)



Figure 5 – T.26.A GROSZY overprint applied to the envelope and not to the stamps

Figure 6 (right) – Inconsistent size of GROSZY overprinting due to unequal wear



At times, a single GROSZY overprint was applied to the envelope rather than to each individual stamp on the envelope. (Figure 5) As the stamp used to apply the overprint was made of rubber, wearing occurred changing the appearance and size of the overprint. With varying pressure and wear, some overprints gradually vary from smaller to larger or vice versa. (Figure 6) “Often the wear of the rubber stamp is so great that the



Figure 8 (top) – 5 zł stamps overprinted in red and 10 zł stamps overprinted in violet

Figure 9 (bottom) – 5 zł stamp with black T.23.A overprint and 10 zł stamp with violet T.1 overprint

overprint becomes nothing but an illegible blot.” [1]
This was noted particularly with black overprint ink,
which interacted with and broke down the rubber.
[2] (Figure 7)



Figure 7 – Illegible blot due to wear

With multiple stamps used on most covers during this era, mixed franking is common. For example, covers including properly overprinted stamps alongside non-overprinted stamps are commonly seen, as illustrated in Figure 2 above. As stamps were purchased and overprinted at different times, mixed commercial franking occurs in which stamps of different overprint color from the same district are used. (Figure 8) Less commonly, mixed franking occurs with stamps purchased from different districts (any overprinted stamp from any district could be used within Poland). [2] (Figure 9)

Examples of most of the district GRO-SZY overprints on cover are relatively common and represent a relatively inexpensive and interesting opportunity for collectors today. Experts will not sign unused stamps with district overprints as most of the original overprinting devices still exist in private hands. Experts will, however, sign properly franked genuine covers.

This is the first of three articles on GROSZY overprints. The second article in this series will address frequency of overprint types, colors, stamps used, and dates of usage from a collection of 269 commercial covers. The third article will cover postal rates within Poland during the era of the GROSZY overprint.

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- [3] *Fischer Katalog Tom I*, 2008, p 99

Easter Cards from Soldiers Interned in Switzerland

By: Piotr Pelczar

Translated by: Roman Sobus

Cards furnished by: Jan Niebrzydowski

Editor's Note: This is the final installment in a series of articles about Holiday Cards from Internees in Switzerland during WWII, a highly specialized area of Polish philately.

Which holiday is more important, Christmas or Easter? For the sake of preventing arguments, after presenting holiday cards from the winter season [1, 2, 3, 5, 6], we have reached the time for holiday cards from the spring season.

We have previously written about Easter holiday cards [4, 6] depicting a black formula card issued in 1941. Thanks to Mr. Jan Niebrzydowski, we can now write about cards issued after 1941. These are small cards of a non-postal nature, little folders having dimensions of 86-90 mm x 109-110 mm after folding, usually mailed in small envelopes having dimensions of 95 x 120mm.

The periodical for prisoners *Goniec Obozowy* [7], dated February 1, 1942, carried an announcement



of a contest open to Polish prisoners, in all Swiss camps to design an Easter card for the year 1942. No restrictions were placed on technique or number of colors, but entries were to be on stiff card stock of dimensions not smaller than 10 x 15 cm. The project was to be submitted, no later than March 1, in an envelope marked with an emblem, and the author's



name in another sealed envelope marked with the same emblem. Three prizes were proposed: 1st – 30 Swiss francs, 2nd – 20 Swiss francs, and 3rd – 10 Swiss francs. Items not awarded a prize could be purchased for 5 francs, while those winning awards became the property of the Komitet Kulturalno-Oświatowy D.S.P. (the Cultural Enlightenment Committee D.S.P.).



Judging was completed on March 14, 1942 and the results were published in *Goniec Obozowy* [9]. Four entries were submitted; one without an emblem, which was eliminated from consideration, two with the emblem "V", and one with the emblem "Two Triangles", which the contest jury ruled "not meeting the criteria of the contest" and not suitable for use. None of the entries was declared a winner of the contest. For artistic consideration, one selection from emblem "V" and one from emblem "Two Triangles", were given 15 francs each as a token gesture. The artists for these selections were Lt. Włodzimirz

Prohaska from the camp in Wintherthur and Corporal Karol Krzyżanowski from the internment camp in Heinrichsbad. The other eliminated works were purchased for 5 francs each by the Polish Museum in Rapperswil.

From the Goniec Obozowy dated March 1, 1942 [8], we have information that for Easter 1942 a duo-color Easter greeting card utilizing a design by Aspirant (Officer Candidate) K. Jodziewicz was being sold by C.O.P.A. to internees as a set with envelope for 10 Swiss rappen.

In 1942, cards were issued without decorative illustrations in two formats: a vertical format with tri-lingual text (**Figure 1**), and a horizontal format, with a bi-lingual text and decorative letters in red, blue and green (**Figure 2**). The item in Figure 2 is courtesy of the internet auction site www.znaczki-pl.com – Easter greetings meant for Brigadier General Bronisław Prugar-Ketling (1891-1948), Commander of the 2nd Division of the Pieszych Rifles.

In 1943, two consecutive Easter cards were issued with holiday text and illustrations. The first design was printed in a vertical format, “Pisanki” (Easter Eggs) with a bi-lingual text and illustration in violet and green (**Figure 3**). The second design, in a horizontal format with tri-lingual text underneath the illustration of a “Baranek” (Easter Lamb), was printed in shades of violet and yellow (**Figure 4**).

Two more designs were issued for Easter 1944. The Easter Lamb design, with tri-lingual text and a blue/red two color illustration was issued in a horizontal format (**Figure 5**). The vertical design depicts a soldier with an armful of pussy willow branches in green and brown colors (**Figure 6**).

Greetings sent in envelopes from the internment camp did not require postage, but were treated as censored fieldpost or prisoner mail (**Figure 7**). The same mailing from outside the camp required postage to be affixed.

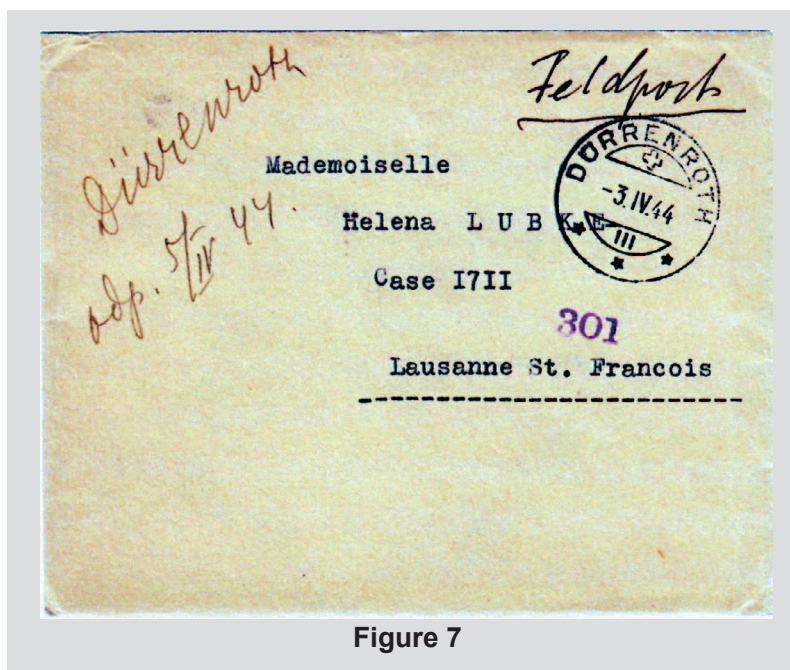


Figure 7

If any readers know of other holiday cards from interned Polish soldiers, please send information to Polonus' POW Camp study group or to Piotr Pelczar at Piotr.Pelczar@wp.pl.

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- [7] *Goniec Obozowy dla internowanych w Szwajcarii z 1.02.1942*, nr 3 (35), rok III
- [8] *Goniec Obozowy z 1.03.1942*
- [9] *Goniec Obozowy z 1.07.1942*

New Issues



Date of Issue	November 5, 2010
Sheet Format	50 Stamps
Printing Method	Rotogravure
Designer	Janusz Wysocki

100 Years of Widzew Łódź

This 1.55 zł stamp commemorates the centennial of Widzew Łódź (Klub Sportowy Widzew Łódź), a professional football (soccer) club based in the Widzew district of the city of Łódź. The stamp depicts a player running and kicking the ball. The first day cover cachet shows a goalie endeavoring to block a shot. The first day cover cancellation portrays a distinctive soccer ball.



Date of Issue	November 18, 2010
Sheet Format	12 Stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Marzanna Dąbrowska

150th Anniversary of Birth of Paderewski

This 3 zł stamp honors the great Polish pianist, composer, diplomat, and politician, Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941). Aside from his major musical accomplishments, he was an active member of the Polish National Committee in Paris during World War I. In 1919 he became Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the newly independent Republic of Poland, and signed the Treaty of Versailles. However, since the treaty failed to restore all Polish territories, he lost much political support and resigned later in 1919. He retired from politics in 1922 and returned to his musical career which included a starring role in the U.S. movie "Moonlight Sonata" in 1936. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery in 1941, but his body was relocated to Warsaw's St. John's Cathedral in 1992. His heart remains encased in a bronze sculpture at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa near Doylestown, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia. The first day cover cachet depicts Paderewski with Polish soldiers.



Date of Issue	November 27, 2010
Sheet Format	100 Stamps
Printing Method	Rotograure
Designer	Jacek Brodowski

Christmas 2010

Two Christmas stamps were issued: a 1.55 zł stamp depicting a snow-covered tree with a bright star on top and lyrics from a Polish carol; and a 2.40 zł stamp depicting a bright star in the heavens and lyrics from another Polish carol. The beautiful first day covers show snowflakes and have cancellations showing shooting stars.

New Issues



Date of Issue	December 30, 2010
Sheet Format	100 Stamps
Printing Method	Rotograure
Designer	Jan Konarzewski

I Love You (Kocham Cię)

This non-denominated “A” stamp (1.55 zł) depicts a small plane emitting exhaust in the shape of a heart with “Kocham Cię” in the center. The first day cover has a cachet showing the plane and a trailing banner with the same inscription in clouds.



Date of Issue	January 28, 2011
Sheet Format	6 Stamps & Tabs
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Maciej Jędrysik

400th Anniversary of Birth of Heweliusz

This 3 zł stamp with tab commemorates the Pomeranian astronomer Jan Heweliusz (Hevelius), famous for his work in identifying lunar topography and 10 new constellations. [Poland issued similar stamps in 1987.] The stamp tab appears to show his detailed celestial drawings and the first day cover cachet shows his urban observatory.



Date of Issue	February 4, 2011
Sheet Format	8 Stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Jacek Brodowski

Field Hockey

The subject of this 2.40 zł stamp is men’s field hockey (hokej na trawie). It depicts a moving player on the field with stick in hand, perhaps endeavoring to score a point. The attractive first day cover has a cachet showing players in action close to the goal, while the cancellation depicts a goalie.

New Issues



Date of Issue	February 11, 2011
Sheet Format	8 Stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Barnabas Baticz

20th Anniversary of Visegrád Group

This 3 zł stamp recognizes the Visegrád Group (Grupa Wyszehradzka), an alliance of 4 central European states – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Its purpose is mutual cooperation in accomplishing their integration into the European Community. The group was founded in 1991 and to date all have developed relatively free market economies. The stamp depicts 2 hands with fingers raised to symbolize V4 for the Visegrád Group and a 20 in the palm of the hands to symbolize the 20th Anniversary, while the first day cover cachet shows a digital representation of the European Union.



Date of Issue	February 28, 2011
Sheet Format	50 Stamps
Printing Method	Rotogravure
Designer	Jacek Konarzewski

Cystic Fibrosis

Poland has established a national week of recognition for this dread disease. The 1.55 zł stamp shows the face of a child and a tree, indicating that the disease is inherited, relating to one's family history. The disease is a common recessive genetic disorder that affects the entire body, causing disability and often early death, and characterized by difficulty in breathing from lung infections that can be treated but not cured by antibiotics; lung transplantation is often necessary. The cause of the disease is a mutation of the gene for the protein fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR) – the gene required to regulate sweat, digestive juices, and mucus. The first day cover cachet shows a quantitative representation of DNA and the cancellation shows portions of the DNA molecule.

Remember, the deadline for payment of dues is the end of March, 2011. Let's make this a great year!